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10 February 2010

Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Coleman

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 3 February 2010, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass my thanks on to the pupils, staff and Chair of the Governing Body with whom I held discussions.

Since the previous inspection, largely because of maternity leave, there has been a mixture of temporary and permanent staff teaching the class for Year 3 and 4 pupils and the class of Year 5 and 6 pupils. This occurred three times in the Year 3 and 4 class. A new Chair of Governors started in September 2009. There has been a significant fall in the numbers on roll from 68 pupils at the time of the inspection to the current 53. The varying numbers on roll affect the school's funding and class organisation year on year.

As a result of the inspection on 27 February 2008, the school was asked to:

- develop pupils' writing skills across all subjects to raise standards of literacy
- use performance information more accurately to set challenging targets, raise expectations and get the best out of all pupils
- check pupils' progress more incisively to plan work in lessons which offers consistent challenge and builds on their skills, knowledge and understanding.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made satisfactory progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.



The standards attained by the Year 6 pupils in the 2009 national tests improved and were generally in line with the national average. The progress of these pupils over their time in the school was satisfactory and the results gained were the highest for over three years. Pupils' standards attained at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics were very low. Pupils' work seen during lessons and the school's information indicate that current Year 2 and 6 pupils are making satisfactory progress overall, and their standards of attainment are generally in line with those expected nationally. However, there are a significant number of pupils who are underachieving and whose progress is slower than expected in Years 3 and 4. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress over their time in the school. Pupils behave well both in lessons and around the school.

There is some good teaching in the school but a significant amount is satisfactory. In the good lessons, planning is well structured and has clear learning outcomes. There are practical, lively and interesting activities which match pupils' abilities accurately and foster good attitudes towards learning. Teaching assistants are well deployed to support pupils who need additional help. Teachers use pupils' learning information well to match the activities closely to what they need to learn next and as a result pupils make good progress. In the less effective lessons, the areas for improvement from the previous inspection are not consistently addressed. Although there are suitably structured planning documents, teachers' individual lesson planning is insufficiently focused and does not identify specific learning outcomes for the different learning needs of all pupils. For example, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are not provided with detailed, structured support and more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Over-long explanations from teachers and time wasted in dealing with organisational matters that were not sufficiently anticipated during the planning of the lesson slow learning down. Teaching assistants are not always deployed to work with pupils throughout the lessons. Pupils' work seen during the visit was regularly and conscientiously marked, usually providing feedback to pupils. The school's focus on improving writing is beginning to pay off, although there are still too many inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the school to ensure this work is embedded.

The headteacher and staff know and care for the pupils very well. The school has faced some challenges, including declining numbers of pupils and changes to staffing within school years. These have been a distraction, reducing urgency and consistency in improving the school, with not enough focus on regular and frequent analysis of performance in order to inform and drive improvements forward at a more rapid pace. There is a plan for improvement, but it is too unwieldy and lacks clear and focused priorities that are linked to measurable outcomes for pupils. The school has worked hard on improvements from the previous inspection and has had some success collecting information about pupils' progress and attainment, which is used to set challenging targets for pupils. However, there has been insufficient rigour and frequency in the monitoring and evaluation of pupils' progress towards these targets or the quality of teaching.



The governing body carries out its statutory duties and is businesslike in its meetings, but is not best placed to challenge senior management or provide support and guidance to the school for its next steps for improvement.

The local authority has provided a satisfactory range of advice and consultancy. As a result of recent visits it has rightly increased its level of support for leadership and management.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Seal
Her Majesty's Inspector

